

NEWS RELEASE

Alabama Department of Public Safety

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Troopers Join in CIOT Blitz ***Urge Motorists to Buckle Up, Drive Safely During Memorial Day***

MONTGOMERY — A Click It or Ticket safety belt enforcement blitz May 22-June 4 will involve state troopers, local law enforcement and traffic safety agencies in a combined effort during the Memorial Day period. The blitz will include checkpoints and increased patrols statewide, along with a series of public service announcements advocating the life-saving benefits of buckling up.

Col. Mike Coppage, Public Safety director, said, "Buckling up can save you from getting a ticket, but more importantly, it can save your life in the event of a traffic crash." According to Coppage, despite reported gains in statewide restraint usage, more than half of vehicle occupants killed in rural crashes in Alabama this year were not buckled up.

Coppage said troopers anticipate heavy traffic and plan to step up patrols statewide during the holiday travel period. He said, in addition to the focus on safety restraint enforcement, they will be on the lookout for all traffic violations, including speeding, driving while impaired by alcohol or drugs, and following too closely.

Troopers will concentrate patrols on high-traffic vacation routes in conjunction with Operation CARE. CARE – Combined Accident Reduction Effort – is an enforcement and safety education effort by state police nationwide during holiday periods, including the Memorial Day period and Buckle Up American Week, May 22-29. In Alabama designated CARE highways for the period will include all interstates and U.S. 231 and 331 south of Montgomery.

The Department of Public Safety estimates that 17 people may die as the result of traffic crashes in Alabama during the 78-hour Memorial Day holiday travel period beginning Friday, May 26, at 6 p.m. and ending at midnight Monday, May 29.

Last year 13 people died in traffic crashes in the state during the 78-hour holiday period. At least three of these fatalities involved alcohol, and none of the vehicle occupants was buckled up. (Last year's fatality total includes nine vehicle occupants, two pedestrians and two motorcyclists). Eleven of the deaths resulted from crashes on the state's rural roads, and two of the fatal crashes occurred in urban locations.

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